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Electronic Resources for Chinese Studies at the Library of Congress

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For the past two decades, the dawn of the digital age with the exponential development in information technology has revolutionized collection development in the libraries all over the world. The new digital environment has created both difficulties and opportunities for librarians.

This article provides an overview of the building of the Chinese studies related electronic resources at the Library of Congress. It reviews the e-resources developed at the Library and the subscription-based databases. In addition, it discusses the services and the future plans for Chinese e-collection development at the Library of Congress.

I. E-resources Developed at the Library of Congress

Naxi Manuscript Collection

The first digital project related to China developed at the Library of Congress is the Naxi Manuscript Collection. The language of the Naxi ethnic group in China, most of whom live in Yunnan and Sichuan provinces, is the only living pictographic language in the world. The collection of 3,342 Naxi manuscripts held by the Library of Congress is the largest outside of China and is considered the finest in the world. In late 1990s, the Library of Congress started to create a freely available online database that is made up of 185 manuscripts, a 39-foot funerary scroll, and an annotated catalog of the entire Naxi manuscript collection. The highlights of the collection include a pictographic creation story, a sacrifice to the Serpent King, love-suicide stories, and accounts of Naxi warriors and other people of high social standing ascending to the realm of the deities. The URL of the site is: <http://international.loc.gov/intldl/naxihtml/naxihome.html>.

Chinese Maps

On October 1, 2004, the Library of Congress and the Academia Sinica in Taiwan signed an agreement for the digitization of China-related maps. Since then 78,151 digital images of the maps and records have been created. These digital files are available online from the website *Inventory of China Related Historical Maps Archived at the Library of Congress* at http://webgis.sinica.edu.tw/map_loc/.

Chinese Rare Book Repository

In 2005, the Library of Congress and National Central Library of Taiwan began a collaborative project to digitize Chinese rare books at the Library of Congress. The two libraries' goal is to share each others' digitized databases of Chinese rare books and make them freely accessible to researchers worldwide. So far 553 titles in *Chinese Rare Book Repository* (on site only -- http://lsj9mbr21/rarebook/bookmain_list.php) have been put online and are ready to be used in Asian Reading Room. Noteworthy items include *Yongle Encyclopedia*, *Illustrated Guide of Tilling and Weaving: Rural Life in China*, and *Life and Activities of Shakyamuni Buddha Incarnate*.

Other LC Online Collections

In 2000, the Asian Division developed an online guide, *Library of Congress Asian Collections: an Illustrated Guide* (<http://www.loc.gov/rr/asian/guide>), which provides researchers with information on the most important Chinese studies related resources at the Library of Congress. In addition, the Asian Division created the following online resources:

- *Christianity in China: An Annotated Catalog of the 19th Century Missionary Works in Chinese at Asian Division, the Library of Congress, U.S.A.* <http://www.loc.gov/rr/asian/files/2009%20Missionary%20Book%20PDF.pdf>
- *The Washington Document Center Collection*, which includes a list of the late Qing editions or the reprints of the Ming editions of Chinese ancient classics <http://www.loc.gov/rr/asian/wdcList/>

Other divisions of the Library of Congress such as the Federal Research Division, Geography & Map Division, Prints & Photographs Division, and Manuscript Division also developed subject specific online resources. For instance, *A Country Study: China* (<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cntoc.html>), developed by the Federal Research Division serves as a basic online encyclopedic source for studies of China. Created by the Geography & Map Division, *Library of Congress Geography and Maps: an Illustrated Guide* (<http://www.loc.gov/rr/geogmap/guide/>), contains valuable information on studies on Chinese geography and cartography.

Global Legal Information Network (GLIN); Guide to Law Online: China (<http://www.loc.gov/law/help/china.php>) is an annotated compendium of sources developed by the Library of Congress Law Library and accessible through the

Internet with links to primary documents, legal commentary, and general government information about China.

The Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Division has designed *Prints & Photographs Online Catalog* with which one can find well over 4,000 prints and photographs about China, Chinese, or Chinese-Americans.

The Library of Congress Manuscript Division has created numerous online finding aids for archival materials of eminent people, such as U.S. diplomat Caleb Cushing, media tycoon Henry R. Luce, Owen Lattimore, U.S. advisor to Chinese Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek during WWII, Chinese-American architect I. M. Pei, etc. All of these finding aids have descriptive information on China-related documents and records in different formats such as correspondence, diaries, photos, telegrams, ephemera, etc.

Under the stewardship of the Library of Congress, the library community in the United States has collaborated in making *Chronicling America: American Historical Newspapers* (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>). This is a free database which allows researchers to search and view newspaper pages from 1860-1922 and find information about American newspapers published between 1690-present. From this database one can find very useful American journalistic accounts of events in China before 1923. For example, the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 is covered in great detail.

World Digital Library

Inspired by the success of the Global Gateway site developed at the Library of Congress, Librarian of Congress Dr. James H. Billington in 2005 proposed a project called the World Digital Library. The goal of this project was to make available to anyone with free access to the Internet digitized texts and images of “unique and rare materials from libraries and other cultural institutions around the world.” The Library of Congress China Team actively participated in this project by providing original materials and metadata.

In April 2009, the World Digital Library was launched. At the time of the launch, the Library included only 1,236 items. As of May 2011, the World Digital Library has over 1,400 items, among which are 90 Chinese prints, photos, maps, and books, contributed by the Library of Congress as well as by libraries in China and Taiwan. Some highlights include *New Atlas of China, Chinese Tartary and Tibet*, *Kangxi Dictionary*, and *The Complete Library in Four Sections [Siku Quanshu]* (<http://www.wdl.org/>).

II. Subscription Based E-resources on Chinese Studies

At present, thirty-five of the Library of Congress' six hundred-plus subscription databases deal with Chinese studies. Noteworthy English-language databases include *Bibliography of Asian Studies* from the Association for Asian Studies, *The Asian Development Bank*, and *ProQuest Asian Business and Reference* from ProQuest.

Since 2004, the Asian Division has exerted continuous efforts to acquire online databases on Chinese studies and thus far has acquired 27 China-related databases. For the time being, the LC collection of Chinese studies related online databases is the largest outside of China. Most of these databases are subscription-based and can only be accessed at the Asian Reading Room. Full-text searchable, these databases give researchers very useful online tools in finding information.

- Statistics show that in recent years, there have been a monthly average of 1,000 to 3,000 search sessions of our databases. Occasionally there has been unusually high usage of certain databases. For instance, in September 2009, there were 1954 visits to one database alone, *Duxiu*.

The Chinese e-resources available at Asian Division of the Library of Congress (<http://www.loc.gov/rr/asian/ChineseDB2.html>) include the following categories. They cover virtually all the research areas:

Scholarly Publications Databases

- *DuXiu* is a one-stop shopping database covering over 3 million books and other materials, including periodicals, newspapers, graduate theses, conference proceedings, videos, and seminar talks published in mainland China. Users can view a portion of searched e-books.
- *China Academic Journal* contains more than 22,000,000 full-text articles from 7,200 journals. This database is one of the most popular databases with readers.
- *Century Journals Social Sciences* features a full-text archive of over 220,000 records from core journals in the social sciences published in Mainland China, with the earliest journal dating back to 1915.
- *China Reference Works Online* is a database comprised of over 1,400 reference works of major academic disciplines, including dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries, thesauruses, encyclopedias, illustrated books, table spectrum, biography, quotations, and handbooks.

- *Academic Conferences in China* offers over 600,000 full-text and 800,000 abstracts of proceedings of national and international conferences held in China since 1986.
- *Dissertations of China* includes over 800,000 full-text and 1,000,000 abstracts of dissertations and theses from major Chinese education and research institutions.

Chinese Government Databases

- *Database of the Chinese Government* includes archives and publications of the Chinese central government, its ministries and subsidiaries, and regional authorities.
- *Database of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference* is a collection of archives and documents of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.
- *Database of the Communist Party of China* contains archives and publications of the Communist Party of China since its establishment in 1921.
- *Database of the National People's Congress* is a collection of reports and documents on the National People's Congress.

Newspaper Databases:

- *National Index to Chinese Newspapers and Periodicals* is an index of over 16,000 titles of Chinese newspapers and periodicals published from 1833 to 1949. As a favor to the Library of Congress, the Shanghai Library, the owner of the database, agreed to allow us to receive up to 10 articles delivered free electronically in each research session.
- *China Core Newspapers Database* contains over 9,000,000 articles from 700 core newspapers.
- *People's Daily* is an online version of the most influential and authoritative newspaper in China and the official voice of the central government of China.
- *People's Liberation Army Daily* is a full-text searchable database for *People's Liberation Army Daily*, the official newspaper of the military of China.
- *WiseSearch* is a bilingual Chinese and English database dedicated to published information from Greater China including Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, as well as information in Chinese or English published in Singapore, Malaysia, and other countries.
- *China Times* is the online version of the Chinese-language newspaper *China Times* published in Taiwan.

Statistics Databases:

- *China Yearbook Full-text Database (Politics/Military Affairs/Law)* covers information including statistics, activities, events, etc. in the fields of politics, military affairs, and law in China.
- *China Infobank* provides access to real time business news, general news articles and magazines, information and statistics on government, and reports and statistics of various industries and regions in China.
- *Soshoo*, as part of *China Infobank*, includes yearly and monthly statistical data on social and economic situation of China. Users can download data into an Excel sheet.
- *China Data Online* provides monthly and annual statistical information and monthly reports on economic development, etc.

Chinese Classics Databases

- *Basic Chinese Classics Database* collects over 10,000 titles of Chinese books, dated from the pre-Qin era (770 to 476 B.C.) to the period of Republic of China (1911-1949). This database is the largest of its kind in the world.

Specialized Databases

- *China: Trade, Politics and Culture, 1793-1980* is developed by a British company. It provides a wide variety of original source material detailing China's interaction with the West. An English language database, it provides a unique Western perspective for examining China.
- *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database* includes primary source materials relating to the Chinese Cultural Revolution of 1966-1976, such as Chinese Communist Party documents, reports, media editorials as well as documents of the Red Guards.

III. Services

In order to promote our online databases, in the past few years the China Team of the Asian Division has provided library instruction services for various kinds of users, including students, professors, librarians, and congressional and government researchers from the Congressional Research Service, Central Intelligence Agency, Congressional Executive Commission on China, and the Defense Department. We have provided library instruction briefings or customized

individual sessions teaching users how to use our electronic resources. As a result more and more researchers have become familiar with our unique e-collections.

In addition to library instruction, we provide online reference services using QuestionPoint, a worldwide online reference service operating on a 24-hours-a-day and 7-days-a-week schedule at <http://www.loc.gov/rr/askalib/>.

VI. Future Plans

Recently Deanna Marcum, the Associate Librarian of the Library of Congress, asked Chinese librarians of the Library of Congress to explore possibilities of acquiring more Chinese e-books. In the near future we will examine and evaluate the products and services of the leading Chinese e-book suppliers, Apabi, Superstar, and others, for acquisition.

We will also focus on databases featuring specialized and hard-to-find materials. We are now in the process of acquiring *China Anti-rightist Campaign Database (1957)*. The Database contains historical documents and archival materials on the Chinese Anti-Rightist Campaign (1957), which was a series of campaigns to purge alleged "rightists." The term "rightists" was used in the late 1950s in China to refer to intellectuals who appeared to favor capitalism and class divisions and to oppose collectivization.

To fill a gap in our database collections in the field of scholarly publications in Taiwan, we plan to acquire *Taiwan Electronic Periodical Services* from Airiti Inc., in Taiwan, which provides full-text access to over 900 Chinese language journals published in Taiwan covering the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, applied sciences, as well as medical and life sciences.

Other projects may include harvesting or archiving critical Web sites which are likely to disappear due to the transient nature of the Internet. Creating online finding aids may also become one of our targeted areas in the future.

Finally, we plan to further promote and publicize our online resources and services by library instruction, conference attendance, and publications so that we can better serve our patrons and achieve our library's strategic goals.

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